



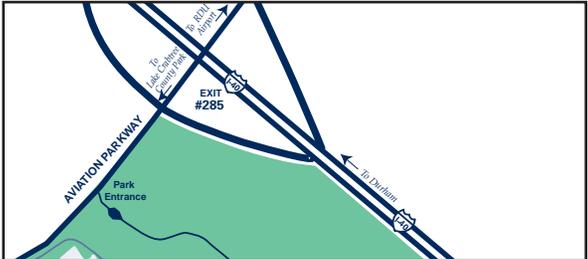
## PARK RULES AND REGULATIONS

Safety and enjoyment go hand in hand at Lake Crabtree County Park. The following rules and regulations have been established to ensure a safe and pleasant visit.

1. SPEED LIMIT IS 20 MPH
2. PETS MUST BE KEPT ON A LEASH
3. OPEN FIRES ARE NOT ALLOWED
4. PARK ONLY IN DESIGNATED AREAS

No parking on roadsides or outside park gates.

5. THE FOLLOWING ARE PROHIBITED:
  - a. Alcoholic beverages
  - b. Firearms
  - c. Hunting
  - d. Overnight camping
  - e. Collections or removal of any animal, plant or mineral material
  - f. Amplified music



Lake Crabtree County Park  
1400 Aviation Parkway  
Morrisville, NC 27560  
919-460-3390

[www.wakegov.com/parks/lakecrabtree](http://www.wakegov.com/parks/lakecrabtree)  
[lakecrabtree@wakegov.com](mailto:lakecrabtree@wakegov.com)

# Lake Crabtree Home Site



## PARK HOURS

8:00 A.M. — SUNSET,  
SEVEN DAYS A WEEK



LAKE CRABTREE COUNTY PARK IS CLOSED  
THANKSGIVING DAY  
CHRISTMAS EVE  
CHRISTMAS DAY  
NEW YEAR'S DAY



**Parks, Recreation  
& Open Space**

Welcome to...

## The Lake Crabtree County Park Home Site

Take a moment to contemplate the history of the land where our park now exists and of those here before us.

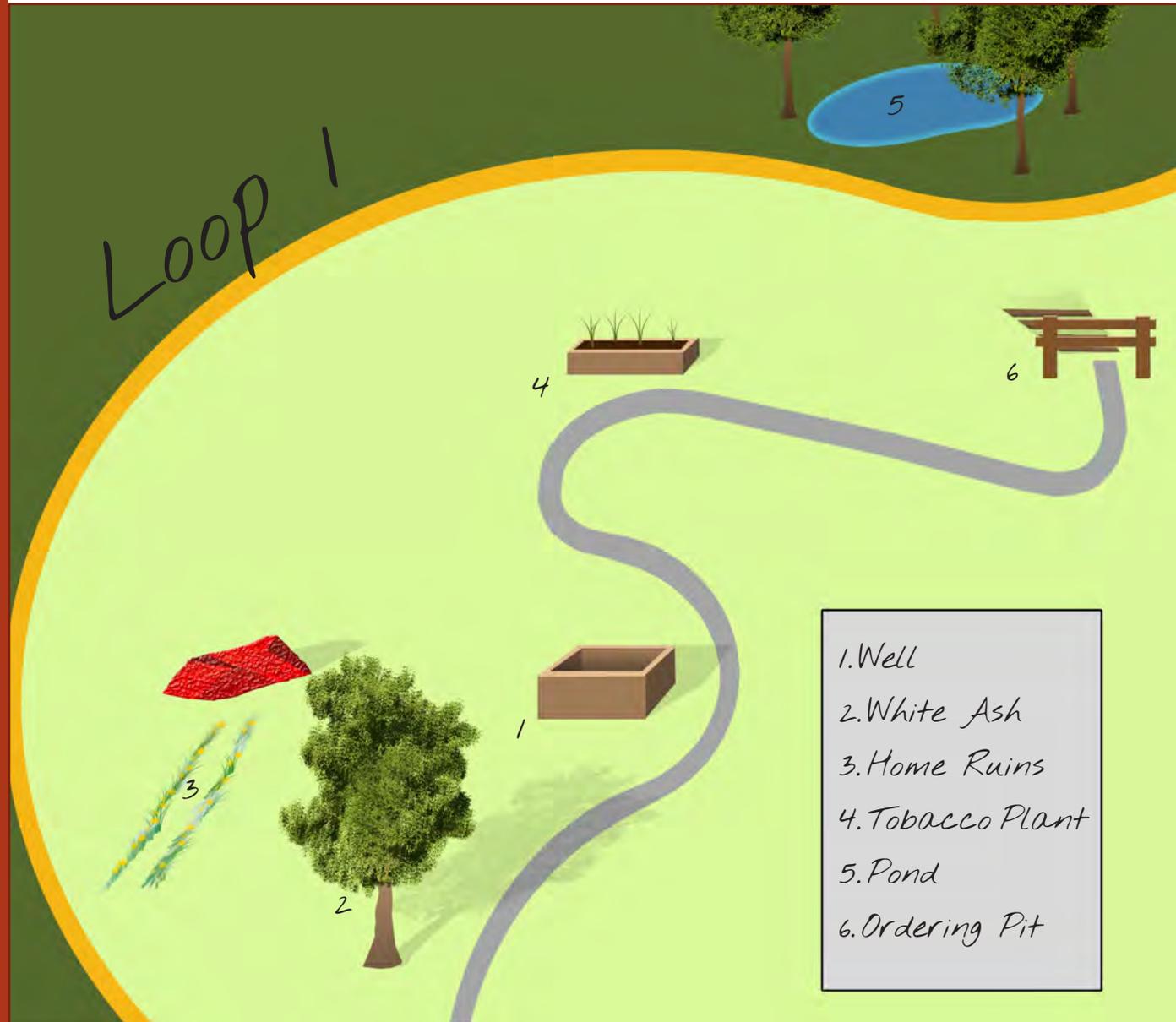
During the park's trail construction and renovations, staff found many Native American projectile points dating to the Archaic Period, indicating that this land was used for hunting and possibly settlement by its human inhabitants for at least the past 5,000 years.



The land teemed with wildlife, including many species that are not commonly associated with North Carolina, such as bison, elk, wolves, and mountain lions. Virgin hardwood forests in the piedmont dominated the landscape before the arrival of the first European explorers and settlers in the 17th Century.

Free audio tour:  
(919) 629-2001

By the mid-19th century, the original native inhabitants had been killed, driven off, or died from newly-introduced diseases for which they had no immunity. The yeoman farmers of English, Scots-Irish, and German ancestry now worked on this land. Small farmers, both landholding and tenant farmers, made up the bulk of the state's population until about one hundred years after the Civil War.



To access the homesite from Open Play, follow connector trail B.

Please leave all artifacts and plant life in place so that they can be enjoyed by others.

# Self-guided Tour



This hand-dug well (1) supplied all of the farm's water for drinking, cooking and bathing.

At 16-feet deep, it probably took days, if not weeks, of back breaking labor with shovels and picks to construct this well. The field stones (so named from being removed from newly cleared land) lining the well were placed here in order to shore up the walls and prevent erosion. The same type of stones were commonly used to build chimneys, building foundation piers and livestock walls. A large well house once covered this well in order to keep debris and animals from falling in and polluting the drinking source.



The massive tree (2) is a White Ash. (*Fraxinus americana*)

This tree provided much needed shade to the family living and working here a century ago. Two factors contribute to this tree's unusual form. First, this tree was "topped" when it was young, which means it was cut leaving only a very tall stump perhaps 8-10 feet high. The tree responded by sending multiple new limbs up from its wound, known as stump sprouting. This created a fast-growing shade tree commonly seen around old home sites. Topping is now highly discouraged because of the long term harm it causes trees, such as interior decay and limbs which are too heavy for the tree to support. The second factor causing the tree's odd shape is this land was cleared and used for crops. Despite being surrounded by forested land now, it was growing in the open a century ago. Typically in a natural setting, trees grow in competition with each other, expending their energy to grow tall capturing sunlight faster than their neighboring trees. A tree growing in a competition-free environment grows wider, sending multiple branches out capturing as much sunlight as possible.



Little is known about the house (3) that once stood here or its inhabitants.

Based on aerial photographs taken in the 1930s and the handmade bricks that once made up the piers and chimneys, this home site probably dates back to the mid-late 19th Century.

Two rows of daffodils outline the walkway leading from the road to the house. We know that the owners of this land during that time did not live here, so the house was probably home to a tenant farming family. The system of tenant farming in the South arose in the wake of the Civil War. The land owner provided housing and typically seed, fertilizer, farming equipment and even livestock on credit, depending on what the tenant owned. The tenant farmed their allotted acreage of land, and repaid the landowner at the end of the season after their crops had been sold at market.

The value of everything that the landowner provided typically outweighed their profit earned, keeping the tenant in an endless cycle of debt. By the late 18th Century, the North Carolina Piedmont had changed drastically from the wilderness of pre-European contact to mostly settled and cleared farmland. The steeper terrain and less-productive soil was much more affordable to purchase than land in the eastern part of the state, and attracted many settlers from Virginia and Pennsylvania eager to farm and own their own land. Subsistence farming was common, with hogs, corn, wheat and potatoes making up the bulk of what was produced and consumed.



In the months of May-October, examples of the tobacco plant (*Nicotiana tabacum*) grow in this raised bed (4).

Tobacco was grown as a supplemental cash crop, but was considered to be of an inferior grade.

In 1839, an African-American slave named Stephen in nearby Caswell County accidentally discovered a new process to cure tobacco. Using charcoal in attempt to relight a fire in a tobacco curing barn, Stephen drastically raised the temperature inside, resulting in a bright yellow cured leaf with a very mild taste. This new product revolutionized tobacco farming, and came to dominate North Carolina's economy.



This large depression in the ground (5) is the remnant of a small pond that supplied the water to irrigate tobacco seedlings.

As the tobacco seedlings matured, they were hand transplanted to the fields in the month of May. By mid-late August, after intense cultivation including weeding, removing the flower from the top of the plant (topping) and unwanted stems (suckering), the plants would be ready for harvest



This dug-out area (6) is the remains of an ordering pit.

After the harvest, the leaves were taken to a tobacco barn, a structure typically 16 feet square and approximately 16 feet tall. The stone foundations of three such barns are nearby. Inside the barn, the individual leaves were tied into bundles called "hands" and placed on a four foot long stick and placed in tiers on horizontal poles rising the height of the barn. A wood fired flue on the barn's exterior provided the necessary heat (over 150 degrees Fahrenheit) for several days to produce the "Bright Leaf" tobacco. Following the curing process, the leaves were too brittle to handle, and were placed in burlap sacks and stored in the ordering pit, dug 4 or 5 feet deep, until the surrounding humidity made the leaves pliable enough to be sorted, grated and stored in the pack house. After this, the tobacco was ready to go to Durham for market.